

## N E W S R E L E A S E

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### **CALIFORNIA HONORS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH**

SACRAMENTO -- In recognition of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the state Employment Development Department (EDD) is reflecting on the contributions of millions of Californians with disabilities who currently serve in our workforce and those who are ready and willing to join the workforce.

EDD Director Patrick Henning said that the key is awareness. Henning said, "All efforts to open up jobs and improve working conditions for people with disabilities must begin with awareness. It begins not only with their needs but also the talents and skills they bring to the workplace. Technological advances also make the employment of people with disabilities more feasible than ever."

Henning also noted that Governor Schwarzenegger has proclaimed October 2005 as California Disability Employment Awareness Month.

EDD observes Disability Employment Awareness Month each year to recognize the talents, skills and dedication of persons with disabilities who constitute a vital part of our work force. During this month, EDD reaffirms its commitment to insuring that people with disabilities who want to work can receive the job services they need to achieve their goals. EDD is committed to enhanced employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Services include job and training referrals, counseling, and job search assistance and workshops.

This year, EDD's Web site, [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov), is profiling some individuals with disabilities and employers who offer work opportunities and possibilities. The site also features career options, resources, information on tax credits, and special programs. For example, EDD operates the Jobs for All Program where specialized staff work one-on-one with individuals to identify skills and work directly with employers to refer the most qualified applicants.

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Many EDD offices around the state will participate in special activities during October, which will serve to highlight the potential of people with disabilities. Many will hold job fairs, career and assistive technology fairs, and special workshops.

EDD's Web site also includes, for the first time, an Internet video, "A Day in the Life" featuring Richard Devylder. Devylder was born in 1969, without arms or legs. He is a graduate of California State University at Long Beach. In 2003, he was appointed Deputy Director, Independent Living and External Affairs, for the Department of Rehabilitation.

This year marks 60 years since Congress first proclaimed October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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